Campus Alberta
- A Policy Framework -

April 2002

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Introduction: Campus Alberta and Lifelong Learning

Campus Alberta is emerging as a key framework under which Albertans will be able to pursue and achieve their lifelong learning goals. Campus Alberta is not a program, nor is it an institution. Rather, it is a concept, a set of principles and a way in which the learning system works together to deliver seamless learning opportunities for Albertans.

Pursuing lifelong learning is essential for people who wish to participate fully and successfully in their communities and careers. Adopting Campus Alberta as a framework under which lifelong learning is able to be realized causes us to challenge commonly held assumptions about what learning is and how it is recognized, who learners are, and what constitutes the learning system.

Within this new context, learning must be recognized not only when it leads to credentials (formal learning), but also when it does not (informal learning). Activities such as mentoring, experiential learning, and reading are viewed as valuable learning experiences whether they occur within a formal or an informal learning context. Crediting individuals for the skills they have acquired (in the workplace, for example) would encourage participation in learning and would eliminate some of the boundaries between the formal education system and learning that occurs outside of the system. It would also enable easier movement between work and school (and vice versa), allowing learners to chose their own paths to knowledge.

With respect to learners, the focus expands beyond individuals of 'traditional' education age (4-25 years) to include people of all ages. Additionally, the learning system expands beyond formal education (schools, colleges, universities, apprenticeship programs) to include other places where learning occurs (workplace, community organizations, home).

Four key factors underlie the importance of lifelong learning and the adoption of a Campus Alberta approach:

- transition to the knowledge economy (the rapid expansion of knowledge and technology is increasing the need to train and retrain highly skilled and innovative workers)
- globalization (the growth of international markets for products, services, expertise and creativity require that business and industry, the learning system and learners, continuously improve to remain competitive)
- full use of potential and existing workforces (there is a growing need for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by Aboriginal people, immigrants, and older workers as a means of bringing new skills into the workplace and to stay current)
- societal understanding that learning supports democracy and helps individuals achieve other objectives in their lives (personal growth, recreation and leisure, health and wellness, family).

Campus Alberta and lifelong learning are foundational to individuals' employability and personal fulfillment and to Alberta's competitiveness.

Campus Alberta Vision

Albertans will have opportunity to participate in lifelong learning supported by a learning system in which learning providers collaborate to deliver quality and innovative learning opportunities - where and when Albertans need them - to enhance their social, cultural, and economic well-being.

Campus Alberta reflects a new way of thinking among stakeholders (individuals, their families and communities, learning providers, business and industry, and government) who increasingly view Alberta's learning environment from a holistic perspective, and recognize the advantages of the existing players in the system working together to better meet learners' needs and improve the efficient use of available resources.

Stakeholders are increasingly using collaboration as both an essential tool in fulfilling their mandates and as an indicator of success. New linkages between stakeholders have been established that extend beyond sector-specific collaboration (e.g. university to university) to include cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g. college to technical institute, university to school authority, educational institution to industry). Emphasis is also shifting from dialogue (e.g. sharing information/expertise or developing a common position on issues) to shared vision and action (e.g. development of new courses, sharing of facilities and resources, improving school-career transitions). There has also been an increase in stakeholders working outside of the education system to address broader socio-economic issues (e.g. school authorities working with social services, law enforcement, health, Aboriginal, immigrant and children's agencies to address the needs of particular groups of learners).

Appendix 1 contains examples of existing learning system collaboration that support Campus Alberta.

Alberta Learning's role in achieving Campus Alberta is to be a catalyst that promotes and sustains these new ways of thinking and working. This role is being fulfilled through ministry activities in four areas:

- policy – e.g. providing opportunities for leadership through the Minister's Forum on Learning and development of the Learning and Technology Framework
- funding to foster stakeholder collaboration – e.g. the Alberta Distance Learning Centre (ADLC), the Alberta Online Consortium (AOC), the Campus Alberta Repository of Educational Objects (CAREO), the Galileo Learning Network, the Telus Learning Connection, the Student Health Initiative, and the Safe and Caring Schools Initiative
- accountability – e.g. Key Performance Indicator on outcomes and effective working relationships
- direct services – e.g. the International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS), the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS), Apprenticeship and Industry Training prior learning assessments, the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT), and the Online Curriculum Repository (OCR).

Campus Alberta and lifelong learning extend beyond the scope of Alberta Learning and learning stakeholders to support cross-ministry initiatives such as the Alberta Children and Youth Initiative, the Economic Development Strategy, the Aboriginal Policy Initiative and the Seniors Policy Initiative.

Through Campus Alberta, Alberta's learning system is becoming increasingly cohesive, flexible and responsive:

- Alberta learners have increased access to an array of quality and relevant learning opportunities that accommodate their other life goals and commitments
- barriers to learner movement within the learning system are reduced
- learner time and system resources are used efficiently
- early childhood development is encouraged so that children start school ready to learn, and seniors' learning is valued for ongoing personal growth, wellness and community enrichment
- Albertans increasingly recognize the importance of lifelong learning and use a combination of formal and informal learning opportunities to meet their ongoing learning needs.

Campus Alberta Principles

Through Campus Alberta the learning system is:

Learner-centred	Activities of the learning system support learners' participation in learning and the achievement of learning outcomes.
Collaborative	Alberta learning system stakeholders work together to achieve common goals at the system-wide and local levels.
Accessible	Albertans have equitable access to quality learning opportunities.
Innovative	New practices in teaching, learning and collaboration are explored and assessed to meet learners' needs.
Responsive	The learning system anticipates and meets learners' needs for what learning opportunities are offered, how they are delivered and how learning is supported.

Campus Alberta Goals

Campus Alberta's objective is to eliminate barriers to learning and foster lifelong participation in learning by increasing learners' ease of entry into and movement within the learning system, by creating more flexible learning opportunities, and by ensuring that learners have the tools they need to succeed in learning. This objective is being achieved by focusing on the following goals:

Goal 1 **Albertans are members of a province-wide learning community.**

Albertans will have access to the collective learning opportunities and resources of the entire learning system. Resources and best practices within the learning system will be shared to enhance the quality of learning while maintaining the strengths of individual learning providers. Learning acquired anywhere within the system will be recognized to allow learners to move freely between different learning sources.

Moving Ahead

Nurturing cross-sectoral collaboration among learning providers, strengthening mechanisms for prior learning and informal learning recognition, and improving access to/enhancing province-wide library and information networks will contribute to the development of a province-wide learning community.

Goal 2 **Albertans have the necessary skills and supports to participate in and benefit from learning.**

Early childhood development, basic literacy and numeracy, meta-learning skills (learning how to learn) and motivation are recognized as essential to participation in lifelong learning.

Learning supports will address the needs of a variety of learners, including youth at risk, people with disabilities, immigrants, Aboriginal people, part-time learners, working learners, and deal with issues such as affordability, informed decision-making, and special needs.

Moving Ahead

Collaborating on early childhood initiatives such as early literacy and parenting supports, removing barriers to high school completion, enhancing opportunities for Aboriginal learners, increasing awareness of the benefits and affordability of post-secondary education, improving access to information about learning opportunities, and increasing access to learning resources that support programs of studies will contribute to Albertans' successful participation in learning.

Goal 3 **Learning opportunities are available when and where they are needed and can be accessed through a variety of means.**

Learning opportunities will be flexible in design, structure and delivery (e.g. classroom learning, online learning, workplace learning, experiential learning) to remove barriers to participation in learning resulting from geographic location of learners, their other life commitments, and learning styles and abilities.

Moving Ahead

Developing a policy framework to clarify the vision, goals and outcomes for technology and learning, implementing a province-wide high-speed telecommunications network, and creating alternative mechanisms for the delivery of Apprenticeship training will contribute to the availability of flexible learning opportunities.

Conclusion

Campus Alberta promotes learning opportunities that are more flexible and responsive to the needs of Alberta learners. Alberta Learning is committed to working with the many partners in the learning system to support achievement of the vision of Campus Alberta. Action is currently underway in several areas across the learning system. Through enhancing access to learning opportunities across Alberta, Campus Alberta will help build the skills and knowledge Alberta needs to support the social and economic goals of Albertans.

Appendix I

Examples of Learning System Collaboration

Campus Alberta involves learners, parents, teachers and instructors, post-secondary institutions, school authorities, business, industry, organizations, communities and government. Examples of stakeholder collaboration include:

Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

Through the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT), Alberta post-secondary institutions, learners, the Ministry of Learning and other learning stakeholders establish policies and agreements for the admission of transfer students, prior learning assessment and recognition, and the award of transfer credit.

Alberta North

Alberta North is a partnership of seven northern Alberta post-secondary institutions that are collaborating to improve access to education and training opportunities for learners in northern Alberta communities through the development of community access points and a shared network of educational services.

Alberta Online Consortium

The Alberta Online Consortium brings together over 100 school authorities, post-secondary institutions and private sector organizations to identify priorities and share resources for online courseware development. The Consortium has also been successful in fostering positive working relationships between K-12 and post-secondary learning providers in areas of content development, professional development and technology support.

Alberta Public Library Electronic Network

Alberta learners may access the combined collections of over 300 Alberta public libraries through the Alberta Public Library Electronic Network (APLEN), a collaborative initiative of the Government of Alberta and a province-wide consortium of university, college, public and special libraries and library organizations.

Alberta Student Number

Alberta Learning, in partnership with schools and post-secondary institutions, is implementing the Alberta Student Number (ASN) Initiative. Through the assignment of ASNs to all Alberta students, it will be possible to obtain information on student transitions between basic and adult learning. This information will facilitate evaluation of educational programs, monitoring of changes and trends in student choices and success, and reporting of educational outcomes to stakeholders and the public.

Apprenticeship and Industry Training

The apprenticeship and industry training system prepares Albertans for careers in skilled trades through comprehensive on-the-job training, work experience and formal technical training. This training is facilitated by partnerships among industry, post-secondary institutions and school authorities, and extends beyond traditional apprenticeship programs to include initiatives such as the Registered Apprenticeship Program, and Careers: The Next Generation Foundation, which encourage youth to commence apprenticeship training while still in school.

Campus Alberta Repository of Educational Objects (CAREO)

CAREO is an Internet-based resource that contains multidisciplinary teaching materials for use by educators across the province. A joint initiative of the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary and Athabasca University, CAREO will support flexible learning delivery by providing access to a range of digital learning content and fostering an online community for the exchange of resources and expertise.

Centre for Innovation in Education

Athabasca University and the Alberta Online Consortium have proposed the development of a provincial Centre for Innovation in Education that would coordinate activity and support research, innovation and best practices in online learning. Partners in the proposed Centre would include post-secondary institutions, school authorities and private sector organizations across the province.

Community Adult Learning Councils

Community Adult Learning Councils collaborate with other learning providers to deliver educational and training opportunities for individuals that are complementary to and coordinated with the other elements of the learning system.

Community Consortia

Community consortia are associations of post-secondary institutions that work with communities and other educational partners to provide learning opportunities for residents in areas of the province that do not have nearby post-secondary institutions. Programs offered by Alberta's four community consortia may include business, academic, administration, trades, university transfer, and others.

Edmonton Area Post-Secondary/High School Partnerships

Grant MacEwan College and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) are working with school boards in the Edmonton area to provide advanced learning opportunities to high school students and encourage enrollment in post-secondary programs:

- Grant MacEwan College will deliver first year college arts courses at a reduced cost to students attending Centre High School. Students that are subsequently accepted into a college or university transfer program will be given advanced standing for courses already taken. A similar agreement is pending between Grant MacEwan and Edmonton Catholic Schools, involving students at Ascension High.

- Through an agreement with Metro Community College (Edmonton Public School Board), Grant MacEwan College courses will also be incorporated into Metro's adult learning programs. Courses are currently offered at Harry Ainlay and ME Lazerte schools on a cost recovery basis. Other schools are under consideration.
- NAIT is collaborating with the Parkland School Division to teach engineering design and drafting to Career and Technology Studies (CTS) students at Spruce Grove High School. A high school instructor will team-teach with a NAIT instructor, thus enabling the high school instructor to become familiar with NAIT techniques and standards, and to teach the program to NAIT standards in the future. Learners earn credits toward the NAIT Engineering Design and Drafting credential at the same time as they earn high school CTS credits. Students meeting NAIT standards will be given "preferred-entry standing" into the program at NAIT.

Master of Counselling Degree Program

A new graduate program in counselling has been created through a partnership between the University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, and Athabasca University. Offered through distance delivery, the program will address the professional development needs of counsellors and psychologists across the province. The program builds on the individual strengths of the participating institutions and will involve alternative delivery strategies such as online learning, summer institutes and local tutors.

Post-Secondary Transfer and Complementary Programs

Colleges, technical institutes and universities collaborate in the development and offering of programs that partially fulfill the requirements of and/or are related to advanced programs at other institutions (e.g. early childhood, teacher training and social work).

Rocky Mountain House Learning Facility

The Wild Rose School Division has proposed the development of a new learning facility in Rocky Mountain House that would contain a public high school wing, a separate high school wing and a post-secondary program wing. Red Deer College and the Pembina Educational Consortium are partners in the initiative. The University of Alberta and Athabasca University have also been identified as potential providers of post-secondary programs.

South Calgary High School

South Calgary High is a new senior high school that has been announced under the New Century Schools Plan. Key features of the new school will include a curriculum model and facilities to enable post-secondary institutions to provide their programs to high school students and to adult learners living in the community.

Tech Prep

Tech Prep assists secondary students to prepare for high-skill occupations through an enhanced program of applied academics, career education and worksite learning opportunities. An initiative of local school authorities, community colleges, business and industry, Tech Prep is currently offered in eight Alberta communities or regions.